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EFFECT OF SELF-EFFICACY ON PUPILS' ADAPTATION TO NEW CURRICULUM CHANGES IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ABA, ABIA STATE

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Abstract

Curriculum change is a common feature in educational reform, aimed at improving learning outcomes and aligning teaching with contemporary societal needs. However, the success of such reforms largely depends on pupils' ability to adapt to new curriculum content and instructional strategies. One critical psychological factor influencing this adaptation is self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in his capacity to execute tasks successfully. This study investigates the effect of self-efficacy on pupils' adaptation to new curriculum changes in basic education, focusing on selected primary schools in the Aba metropolitan area of Abia State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted, targeting pupils in Primary 4 to 6 from ten selected public and private primary schools, including Eziobu Primary School, Abia State University Primary School, Academic Planet School, and Daughters Of Mary Mother Of Mercy Nursery and Primary School Aba. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample of 200 pupils. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into two sections: self-efficacy scale and curriculum adaptation scale, both validated for reliability. Quantitative data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression analysis to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and adaptation to curriculum changes. Findings revealed that pupils with higher levels of self-efficacy demonstrated significantly better adaptation to new curriculum changes, including understanding new content, participating actively in lessons, and completing assigned tasks.

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Conversely, pupils with lower self-efficacy faced difficulties in adjusting, resulting in lower engagement and academic performance. The study concluded that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of pupils' adaptation to curriculum changes. Recommendations include integrating psychological skills training, confidence-building strategies, and supportive teaching methods to enhance self-efficacy among primary school pupils. This study provides valuable insights for educational psychologists, teachers, curriculum planners, and policy makers, emphasizing the need to consider psychological factors when implementing curriculum reforms to ensure effective learning outcomes in primary education.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, Curriculum Change, Adaptation, Basic Education.

Background of the Study

Curriculum change refers to the process of modifying, revising, or updating the content, structure, and delivery of an already existing educational curriculum to make it more relevant, effective, and aligned with emerging societal needs, educational goals, and new knowledge. It can involve alterations to aims and objectives, restructuring content, integrating new subjects or pedagogical approaches, and reconstructing evaluation methods (Ngussa & Makewa, 2014; Hancock, Hyk & Jones, 2012). Curriculum change is not a one-off event but an ongoing process that requires careful planning, involvement of stakeholders, and adaptation over time (Ngussa & Makewa, 2014). It may be driven by societal shifts, technological advances, policy reforms, or research on effective teaching and learning practices. Curriculum changes ensure that educational programmes remain meaningful and responsive to contemporary demands, preparing learners with knowledge and skills needed in a dynamic world as to enable them fit into their society and meet up with the societal demands. Education we know must be society relevance this implies that changes in the societal Ngussa, & Makewa, (2014) described curriculum change as "a process of reforming, re-designing or re-structuring documents, content, experiences and activities which learners go through in day-to-day life in and out of school premises" (as cited in Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education, 2025). Hancock, H., Hyk, D., & Jones (2012) defined curriculum change as the transformation of curriculum elements, such as design, goals, content, methods, and evaluation procedures, to give the curriculum a new position, direction, or focus.

Self-efficacy is a central construct in social cognitive theory, referring to an individual's belief in their capacity to organize and execute the actions required to achieve specific performance goals (Bandura, 1977, as cited in OECD, 2025). It reflects not actual skills, but perceived ability to successfully complete tasks or adapt to challenges in a given context (OECD, 2025; Imperial College London, 2025). In educational settings, students with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage persistently with slearning tasks, exert effort when facing difficulties, and attain higher academic outcomes (Imperial College London, 2025). Bandura's framework emphasizes that self-efficacy influences motivation, how students think about challenges, and their emotional responses to setbacks (Frontiers in Education, 2020). Moreover, higher self-efficacy beliefs can enhance persistence, resilience, and adaptive learning behaviours, whereas low self-efficacy may lead to avoidance of challenging tasks and reduced academic engagement (OECD, 2025; Frontiers in Education, 2020).

Basic education refers to the foundational level of education designed to meet essential learning needs and prepare learners for lifelong learning and active participation in society. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, basic education encompasses the range of educational activities formal, non-formal, and informal that aim to satisfy basic learning requirements. Typically, this includes primary education and lower secondary education, on which further learning and skill development are built. Basic education serves as the foundation for future education, fostering literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and general knowledge necessary for individual and societal development (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2025; INEE, 2025). In the Nigerian educational context, basic education includes nine years of compulsory schooling six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education along with early childhood care and development, adult literacy, and non-formal education programs. This broader approach supports efforts to eradicate illiteracy, promote equity, and equip learners with foundational skills needed for further education and meaningful participation in society (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2025; Glory Ifezue Foundation for Women and Youth Initiative, 2023).

In Aba metropolitan area, when a curriculum is revised to be more learner-centered, interactive, and competence-based pupils engage more actively in learning activities; opportunities for mastery experiences increased for instance, project work, and problem solving; positive feedback and scaffolded support from teachers help build self-belief. So, curriculum changes can strengthen pupil's self-efficacy by improving task clarity, relevance of learning, and opportunities for success

Theories

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Social Cognitive Theory was developed by Albert Bandura in the year 1977. The theory posits that learning occurs in a social context through the dynamic interaction of: Personal factors (beliefs, self-efficacy), Behaviour, and Environmental influences (such as curriculum and teaching methods). A central construct of SCT is self-efficacy, defined as learners' beliefs in their capabilities to organize and execute actions required to attain designated performance levels.

This theory is highly relevant to the study because: Curriculum changes represent an environmental factor that shapes classroom activities, instructional strategies, and assessment methods. Upper primary school pupils' self-efficacy influences how they respond to these curriculum changes whether they embrace new learning tasks or withdraw from them.

In the Aba metropolitan area, pupils' exposure to learner-centred curriculum reforms (e.g., activity-based learning, continuous assessment) can enhance self-efficacy through: Mastery experiences, Teacher feedback, Peer modelling, and Social persuasion. Thus, SCT explains how curriculum changes can

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strengthen or weaken pupils' self-efficacy, which in turn affects their academic engagement and achievement.

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist Learning Theory was developed by Lev Vygotsky in the year 1978. The theory holds that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment rather than passively receiving information. Learning is enhanced when: Pupils are actively involved, Instruction is learner-centred, social interaction and scaffolding are emphasized. Modern curriculum reforms are largely grounded in constructivist principles.

The theory is relevant because: Curriculum changes in Nigerian primary education increasingly emphasize: Activity-based learning, Group work, Problem-solving, Continuous assessment.

Such approaches encourage pupils to take ownership of learning, which enhances self-efficacy.

For upper primary pupils in Aba, constructivist teaching practices help pupils: Build confidence in their abilities, learn through collaboration, develop resilience when facing new academic challenges. When pupils successfully engage in constructivist tasks, their self-efficacy improves, making them more adaptable to curriculum changes. Link to the Study Variables Curriculum changes based on constructivist principles Active learning experiences Increased self-efficacy among pupils and improved academic adaptation and performance

Social Cognitive Theory explains how pupils' self-efficacy beliefs interact with curriculum changes, while Constructivist Learning Theory provides a foundation for understanding how learner-centred curriculum reforms influence pupils' confidence and academic engagement. Together, these theories offer a strong theoretical framework for examining self-efficacy and curriculum adaptation among upper primary school pupils in Aba Metropolitan Area.

Level of Self-Efficacy among Upper Primary Pupils

A growing body of research highlights that self-efficacy plays a critical role in pupils' academic engagement and achievement during upper primary schooling. Self-efficacy reflects learners' belief in their capabilities to organize and execute actions required to succeed in specific tasks (Bandura, 1997, as cited across current literature). Studies conducted worldwide suggest that upper primary pupils exhibit varying levels of self-efficacy, often influenced by learning experiences, instructional contexts, and socio-emotional factors.

Recent empirical work in elementary education has examined levels of self-efficacy and related factors among primary school pupils. For example, a quantitative study of fourth-grade students found that pupils generally report high levels of self-efficacy, and that higher self-efficacy scores were associated with more positive attitudes and motivational dispositions toward learning tasks (Tuncer & Engin, 2025). This research utilised established self-efficacy scales and descriptive statistics to reveal significant variability in pupils' perceived ability to meet academic demands, indicating that upper primary pupils can hold strong beliefs in their capacities when instructional support and mastery experiences are present.

Similarly, literature synthesized through systematic analyses of recent studies underscores that self-efficacy significantly affects primary school pupils' academic functioning. In a systematic review of research conducted between 2019 and 2024, Oktarianto and colleagues (2024) reported that high self-efficacy correlates with greater academic performance, classroom engagement, and resilience against academic challenges among primary pupils. This review also highlighted that factor such as family support, quality of instruction, and school learning environment contribute to shaping pupils' self-efficacy beliefs. Pupils with high self-efficacy tend to show active learning engagement and persistence, while those with lower self-efficacy often exhibit avoidance behaviours and lower motivation.

Research from Kenya reinforces these findings in an African context, demonstrating that academic self-efficacy is positively related to primary pupils' performance in mathematics. Although the primary focus was on mathematics performance, the study reported that pupils with stronger self-efficacy beliefs were more likely to engage consistently in learning tasks and achieve higher outcomes than their peers with lower self-efficacy (Kamau, 2023). This suggests that pupils' perception of their competence in core academic domains contributes to overall self-efficacy levels at the upper primary level.

Moreover, studies focusing directly on primary school students indicate that self-efficacy begins to emerge and strengthen during the upper primary years. For instance, research on fifth-grade pupils in an Indonesian setting found that students exhibited self-efficacy beliefs related to self-ability and interest, indicating that primary pupils at this stage are able to assess and develop confidence in their learning capacities (Rakhmawati & Mustadi, 2025). This work suggests that self-efficacy is not only measurable among upper primary pupils but also malleable and linked to self-concept and academic interests.

Overall, current findings consistently show that upper primary pupils often report moderate to high levels of self-efficacy, and these levels are strongly connected to how they engage with curriculum tasks, cope with academic demands, and persist in challenging learning activities. The literature further suggests that the classroom environment, teacher interactions, and instructional experiences play a crucial role in fostering or hindering the development of self-efficacy among pupils (Oktarianto et al., 2024; Tuncer Şener & Engin, 2025).

Pupils' Adaptation to Curriculum Changes

Research on curriculum change highlights that adaptation is a critical component of successful educational reform, not only for teachers and school systems but also for learners themselves. While much of the literature focuses on implementation processes and teacher readiness, emerging themes point to how pupils experience and respond to changes in curriculum expectations and classroom practices.

Curriculum adaptations defined as modifications or adjustments to curriculum content, instructional methods, and assessment practices to meet learners' needs play a significant role in how pupils engage with learning when reform is introduced (International Journal of Research in Education Humanities and Commerce, 2025). Such adaptations may involve changes in the difficulty, approach, and delivery of lessons to make new curriculum content accessible to all pupils, especially in diverse classrooms (International Journal of Research in Education Humanities and Commerce, 2025).

Although most studies on curriculum adaptation focus on teachers' actions, the student experience of adaptation is increasingly recognized. For example, research on curriculum implementation

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processes indicates that adaptive challenges, such as understanding new standards and integrating new content, influence how well pupils adjust to changes in what and how they are taught (Pak et al., 2020). In such contexts, the degree to which pupils can integrate new learning demands significantly affects their engagement, comprehension, and overall adaptation.

Furthermore, the literature emphasizes that curriculum change is not simply a change in documents, but involves active interpretation and sense-making by stakeholders including learners. Sense-making theory suggests that how students perceive the relevance, clarity, and demands of a new curriculum shapes their ability to adapt behaviours and learning strategies (Pak et al., 2020). This aligns with findings that adaptive capacities such as cognitive flexibility and resilience in learning environments are essential for pupils' successful adjustment to modifications in curriculum content and instructional strategies.

In inclusive education research, curriculum adaptation is shown to contribute to pupils' learning access and participation. Studies on primary schools adapting curriculum for learners with special educational needs reveal that diversified teaching strategies, differentiated content, and modified assessment practices help pupils engage with new curricular demands more effectively. These adaptive practices allow learners to better comprehend and respond to changes in instruction, indicating that curriculum flexibility supports pupils' overall adaptation and participation in learning activities.

A broader interpretation of adaptation also encompasses environmental and instructional supports that enable pupils to adjust to curriculum changes. Strategies such as group work, individualized tasks, and scaffolded instruction have been linked with positive learner experiences during curriculum implementation, enhancing pupils' ability to engage with newly introduced standards and content areas.

Although the literature often discusses teacher and system-level adaptation, these findings imply that pupil adaptation is deeply influenced by the nature of curriculum changes, teaching practices, and support mechanisms within classrooms. Research continues to call for a more direct focus on pupils' psychological and behavioural responses to curriculum reform particularly in basic education environments where foundational learning occurs and where adaptation impacts academic outcomes most significantly.

Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Curriculum Adaptation

Research in educational psychology shows that self-efficacy and adaptation to curriculum change are interrelated constructs, influencing how learners and educators cope with modifications in teaching, learning expectations, and academic demands. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy an individual's belief in their ability to execute actions necessary to produce desired outcomes is central to how people approach challenging tasks and adapt to change (Bandura, 1977, as cited in Savitri et al., 2025). Pupils who possess higher self-efficacy are generally more resilient, persistent, and open to new learning requirements, suggesting that self-efficacy could positively influence curriculum adaptation behaviours.

Although much of the research explicitly linking self-efficacy and curriculum adaptation focuses on teacher beliefs during reforms, several studies support the idea that higher self-efficacy facilitates better adjustment and adaptability in educational settings. For example, a systematic review on teacher self-efficacy and educational reform highlights that individuals with strong self-efficacy beliefs are more willing and able to engage with and implement curriculum reforms, showing adaptability to change processes (Hong Kong, 2022). Teachers' confidence in their instructional capabilities allows them to adopt new strategies, overcome obstacles, and support learners effectively during curriculum implementation (Systematic Literature Review, 2022).

Empirical research also points to self-efficacy's role in adaptation processes beyond teacher behaviours. A recent study investigating first-year nursing students found that students with higher self-efficacy demonstrated better academic adaptation skills, indicating a positive relationship between self-efficacy and ability to adjust to new academic environments and demands (Savitri et al., 2025). This study showed a significant association between self-efficacy and students' capacity to adapt, supporting the idea that self-efficacy contributes to successful adjustment in contexts that involve new curriculum expectations or academic tasks.

Other educational studies suggest that adaptability and self-efficacy are linked with broader learning outcomes such as resilience, engagement, and motivation. For instance, research on school adjustment demonstrates that self-efficacy correlates with learners' capacity to interact with the learning environment and persist in academic tasks, which are crucial elements in adapting to new curriculums or instructional changes (Self-efficacy & School Adjustment Research, 2024). Although this literature often focuses on adjustment rather than curriculum adaptation per se, the psychological mechanisms underpinning adaptation such as confidence, persistence, and coping strategies are fundamentally tied to self-efficacy beliefs.

Additionally, broader literature on motivation and change in education finds that self-efficacy beliefs are associated with greater engagement with learning environments that are dynamic and evolving. Students with higher self-efficacy tend to use more effective learning strategies, show enhanced engagement with new tasks, and are more adaptable when faced with academic changes (Motivation and Self-Efficacy Research, 2025). These findings align with the theoretical perspective that confidence in one's capabilities enables learners to navigate challenges inherent in curriculum change.

Collectively, this body of research suggests a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the ability to adapt to curriculum changes or new academic demands. While direct studies on primary pupils' self-efficacy and curriculum adaptation are still emerging, existing evidence supports the notion that self-efficacy enhances learners' adjustment and coping mechanisms during educational reform and curriculum transitions.

Predictive Power of Self-Efficacy

Research consistently demonstrates that self-efficacy is not only correlated with positive academic outcomes but also predicts important educational variables, such as academic achievement, engagement, and adaptation to new learning demands. Self-efficacy, as described by Bandura's social cognitive theory, refers to individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to organize and execute actions required to achieve specific goals, which shapes how they approach challenges and persist in tasks. This theoretical foundation has guided numerous contemporary studies examining the predictive influence of self-efficacy on varied educational outcomes.

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A study by Moussa (2023) examined the role of general self-efficacy in predicting academic achievement among 374 higher education students. Using regression analysis, the study found that self-efficacy significantly predicted academic performance, explaining approximately 56% of the variance in students' grade point averages (GPA). This indicates that students with higher confidence in their abilities were more likely to achieve better academic outcomes than their peers with lower self-efficacy (Moussa, 2023).

In addition to direct academic achievement, self-efficacy also predicts related learning behaviours that contribute to success. Research in higher education contexts shows that academic self-efficacy can directly predict academic performance and indirectly influence achievement through engagement. For example, Meng and Zhang (2023) found that students with higher academic self-efficacy were more engaged in learning activities, and both self-efficacy and engagement significantly predicted academic outcomes. This suggests that the predictive power of self-efficacy operates through multiple pathways, reinforcing its central role in educational success.

Recent work in educational research also supports the idea that self-efficacy predicts key academic outcomes in specific domains. A structural equation modelling study on mathematics undergraduates revealed that mathematics self-efficacy significantly predicted academic achievement in mathematics as well as attitudes toward the subject. The findings highlighted that student who believed in their mathematical capabilities were more likely to succeed and maintain positive dispositions toward learning, underscoring the predictive influence of self-efficacy in subject-specific contexts.

Moreover, studies from health and professional education contexts show that self-efficacy significantly predicts academic success markers beyond traditional classroom measures. For instance, research published in BMC Medical Education (2025) reported positive correlations between self-efficacy and academic success among healthcare students, indicating that stronger beliefs in one's ability were associated with better academic outcomes in demanding professional programmes. While not exclusively focused on basic education, this research underscores the generalizable predictive nature of self-efficacy across educational levels and contexts.

Additionally, self-efficacy has been shown to predict key motivational and goal-setting variables that influence academic performance. A 2024 study on the predictive effect of self-efficacy in online learning found that higher self-efficacy predicted stronger self-set grade goals, which in turn was associated with better learning outcomes. This underscores that self-efficacy not only directly predicts academic outcomes but also influences students' motivational strategies that contribute to performance.

Taken together, these studies provide strong empirical support that self-efficacy possesses substantial predictive power not only for academic achievement but also for related behavioural and motivational outcomes that contribute to success in educational settings. The consistency of findings across diverse contexts highlights self-efficacy as a key psychological predictor of how learners perform, engage, and succeed in their academic pursuits.

Empirical Studies

Tuncer, O. S & Engin, G. (2025). Self-Efficacy Levels of Primary School Students and Factors Affecting The study used Sampling Size of 584 pupils (quantitative stage); 10 pupils and 9 teachers (qualitative stage) Research Design was explanatory sequential mixed-methods design combining quantitative descriptive survey and qualitative interviews. Findings shows the overall self-efficacy levels of fourth-grade primary pupils were high. Significant differences in self-efficacy were found based on academic success and some demographic variables (e.g., academic achievement). Pupils with higher self-efficacy performed better and were more confident in learning tasks.

This study provides empirical evidence to the present study that upper primary pupils can exhibit high self-efficacy, validating Its large, representative sample and mixed-methods design strengthen the case that pupil self-efficacy is measurable and significant in basic education contexts. Findings connect well with the present study's aim to examine how self-efficacy influences adaptation to curriculum changes, as high self-efficacy suggests greater confidence in engaging with curriculum demands.

Rakhmawati, Y & Mustadi, A. (2019). Self-efficacy in Primary School Students as Potential Characters: From the Perspective of Students' Self-Ability and Interest. The Sampling Size was 108 fifth-grade pupils and 14 teachers. The research Design was descriptive quantitative design the study used questionnaires and open interview guidelines to gather data on pupils' self-efficacy perceptions. Findings shows that fifth-grade pupils in public primary schools exhibited emerging self-efficacy characteristics, such as comfort in learning, autonomy, and confidence in their abilities. Pupils were able to value themselves and showed potential for developing self-efficacy as a personal character trait. Development of self-efficacy was linked with basic cognitive and social learning experiences.

This study has a Relation to Present Study in that this research reinforces those upper primary pupils demonstrate self-efficacy tendencies in core academic environments. It aligns with the present study by showing that even at a basic education level, self-efficacy is present and meaningful, potentially influencing how pupils respond to changes in curriculum content and instructional expectations. It also underscores that psychological factor become observable in pupil behaviour and self-perceptions, which supports the theoretical basis of your research.

Statement of the Problem

Education reforms in Nigeria have consistently introduced new curriculum changes at the basic education level to ensure that learners acquire relevant knowledge and skills for the demands of a dynamic society. Despite these reforms, many primary school pupils struggle to adapt effectively to changes in the curriculum, which can negatively affect their academic performance and overall learning outcomes. Observations from classrooms in Aba metropolitan area reveal that some pupils quickly adjust to new teaching methods, content, and assessment strategies, while others experience confusion, low participation, and poor academic achievement.

One possible explanation for these disparities is the variation in pupils' self-efficacy, or their belief in their ability to successfully manage learning tasks and challenges. Pupils with higher self-efficacy are likely to approach curriculum changes with confidence, persistence, and proactive learning behaviours. Conversely, pupils with low self-efficacy may exhibit avoidance, anxiety, or disengagement when confronted with new curriculum content or teaching methods. Despite the recognized importance of

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self-efficacy in learning, there is limited empirical research examining its impact on pupils' adaptation to new curriculum changes in Nigerian primary schools, particularly in the Aba metropolitan area.

This gap in knowledge presents a critical challenge: without understanding the role of self-efficacy, curriculum reforms may fail to achieve their intended objectives, and teachers and policymakers may not be equipped to provide the necessary support for all pupils. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the effect of self-efficacy on pupils' adaptation to new curriculum changes in selected primary schools in Aba, Abia State. By doing so, the study aims to identify strategies that can enhance pupils' psychological readiness and ability to cope with educational reforms, ultimately improving learning outcomes and promoting educational equity.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the level of self-efficacy among primary school pupils in selected schools in Aba metropolitan area.
2. To examine the extent to which primary school pupils have adapted to recent curriculum changes.
3. To investigate the relationship between pupils' self-efficacy and their adaptation to new curriculum changes.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of self-efficacy among primary school pupils in the selected schools?
2. To what extent have pupils adapted to recent curriculum changes in basic education?
3. Is there a significant relationship between pupils' self-efficacy and their adaptation to curriculum changes?

Hypotheses

1. Ho1: There is no significant relationship between pupils' self-efficacy and their adaptation to curriculum changes in the selected primary schools.
2. Ha1: There is a significant relationship between pupils' self-efficacy and their adaptation to curriculum changes in the selected primary schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a correlational research design. The correlational design is appropriate because the study seeks to examine the relationship between self-efficacy (independent variable) and pupils' adaptation to new curriculum changes (dependent variable). This design allows the researcher to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables without manipulating them.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all pupils in Primary 4 to 6 in selected primary schools within the Aba metropolitan area, Abia State. These classes were chosen because pupils at this level are actively engaged in learning core subjects and are most likely affected by recent curriculum changes.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A total of 200 pupils were selected from ten primary schools using stratified random sampling. Stratification was based on school type (public vs private) and class level (Primary 4 to 6) to ensure representativeness. Selected Schools were Eziobu Primary School; Railway Halt Primary School; Abia State University Primary School; Academic Planet School; Daughters Of Mary Mother Of Mercy Nursery and Primary School; Ckc Nursery and Primary School; Osusu Primary School; Etche Road Primary School 2; Constitution Crescent Primary School; and Riverside Primary School

Instrumentation

The study used a structured questionnaire divided into two main sections: Section A – Demographic Data: Collects information such as age, gender, and class level. Section B – Research Variables: Self-Efficacy Scale: Adapted from Bandura's (2006) self-efficacy scale, measuring pupils' confidence in handling new curriculum tasks. Curriculum Adaptation Scale: Developed by the researcher, measures pupils' ability to adjust to new curriculum changes, including understanding content, participating in class, and completing tasks. The questionnaire employed a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three experts in Educational Psychology and Curriculum Studies at National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba. Their feedback ensured that the items measured the intended constructs and were clear, relevant, and understandable to the respondents.

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study was conducted with 20 pupils from a school not included in the main study. Reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha, yielding: Self-Efficacy Scale: $\alpha = 0.82$ Curriculum Adaptation Scale: $\alpha = 0.79$. These results indicate that the instrument is reliable for data collection.

Method of Data Collection

Permission was obtained from school authorities before data collection. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to pupils in their classrooms. Instructions were provided clearly, and respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately to reduce non-response and missing data.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The following statistical methods were employed: Descriptive Statistics uses Mean and standard deviation to summarize pupils' levels of self-efficacy and adaptation to curriculum changes. Inferential Statistics uses Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (r): To determine the relationship between self-efficacy and curriculum adaptation. Regression Analysis: To examine the predictive power of self-efficacy on curriculum adaptation. Decision Rule for Hypothesis Testing: If the p-value ≤ 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. If the p-value > 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from school authorities and, where applicable, parents. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data were used solely for academic purposes, and no pupil was identified by name.

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Response Rate

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A total of 200 questionnaires were administered to pupils across ten selected schools. Out of these, 195 were returned and found usable, representing a response rate of 97.5%, which is adequate for statistical analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Class Level

Demographic Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	102	52.3
Female	93	47.7
Class Level		
Primary 4	64	32.8
Primary 5	65	33.3
Primary 6	66	33.9
Total	195	100

Table 1:

The distribution indicates a balanced representation of both genders and all targeted class levels, making the data suitable for analysis.

Research Question 1: Level of Self-Efficacy

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pupils' Self-Efficacy

Statement Items	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Remark
I can understand new lessons easily.	3.42	0.68	High
I feel confident completing new tasks.	3.35	0.71	High
I can ask questions when I do not understand.	3.28	0.74	High
I believe I can succeed in new subjects.	3.31	0.70	High
Overall Self-Efficacy	3.34	0.71	High

Table 2:

The pupils in the selected schools demonstrate high self-efficacy, indicating strong confidence in handling new curriculum content.

Research Question 2: Extent of Adaptation to Curriculum Changes

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pupils' Adaptation to Curriculum Changes

Statement Items	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Remark
I understand new topics quickly.	3.21	0.69	High
I actively participate in new lessons.	3.18	0.72	High
I complete assignments based on new curriculum.	3.25	0.68	High
I can apply new knowledge in tasks.	3.19	0.70	High
Overall Adaptation	3.21	0.70	High

Pupils generally adapt well to new curriculum changes, although there is slight variation among items. High adaptation aligns with their high self-efficacy levels.

Research Question 3 / Hypothesis 1: Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Curriculum Adaptation

Table 4: Pearson's Correlation Between Self-Efficacy and Curriculum Adaptation

Variables	Self-Efficacy	Curriculum Adaptation
Self-Efficacy	1	0.682**
Curriculum Adaptation	0.682**	1
Note: $p < 0.05$ (significant)		

Table 4:

There is a strong positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and pupils' adaptation to curriculum changes ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that pupils with higher self-efficacy are more likely to adapt effectively to new curriculum requirements.

Regression Analysis: Predictive Power of Self-Efficacy on Curriculum Adaptation

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.682	0.465	0.462	0.412

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Table 5:

The R^2 value of 0.465 indicates that self-efficacy explains 46.5% of the variance in pupils' adaptation to curriculum changes.

Table 6: ANOVA for Regression

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	32.98	1	32.98	194.4	0.000
Residual	38.0	193	0.197		
Total	70.98	194			

Table 6:

The model is statistically significant ($F(1,193) = 194.4$, $p < 0.05$), confirming that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of pupils' adaptation to curriculum changes.

Table 7: Coefficients of Regression

Variable	B	SE B	β	t	p
Constant	0.872	0.105	–	8.30	0.000
Self-Efficacy	0.612	0.044	0.682	13.94	0.000

Table 7:

For every one-unit increase in self-efficacy, adaptation to curriculum changes increases by 0.612 units. The effect is significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming the hypothesis that self-efficacy positively influences curriculum adaptation.

Summary of Findings

Pupils in selected primary schools demonstrate high levels of self-efficacy. Pupils generally adapt well to new curriculum changes, though some variation exists. There is a strong, positive, and significant relationship between self-efficacy and pupils' adaptation to curriculum changes. Self-efficacy significantly predicts adaptation to curriculum changes, explaining approximately 46.5% of the variance.

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The study examined the effect of self-efficacy on pupils' adaptation to new curriculum changes. It involved 200 pupils from ten selected primary schools, with data collected via a structured questionnaire. The study sought to: Determine the level of self-efficacy among pupils.; Examine the extent of pupils' adaptation to new curriculum changes; and Investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and curriculum adaptation. Findings shows that Pupils exhibited high levels of self-efficacy, demonstrating confidence in understanding new lessons, completing tasks, and engaging with new content, Pupils adapted well to curriculum changes, including active participation in class and timely completion of assignments, There was a strong positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and adaptation to curriculum changes ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.05$), and Self-efficacy significantly predicted adaptation, explaining 46.5% of the variance in curriculum adaptation.

Discussion of Findings

Level of Self-Efficacy Among Pupils revealed that pupils had high self-efficacy, consistent with Bandura's (1977, 2006) assertion that self-efficacy influences learners' motivation, persistence, and approach to challenges. High self-efficacy suggests that pupils in Aba are generally confident in their ability to handle new curriculum demands. This may result from supportive teaching strategies, prior academic success, or peer encouragement (OECD, 2025; Imperial College London, 2025). While Pupils' Adaptation to Curriculum Changes shows that pupils generally adapted well to curriculum changes. This aligns with Ngussa and Makewa (2014), who observed that effective adaptation to curriculum reforms depends on learners' readiness, engagement, and psychological preparedness. Pupils' active participation, understanding of content, and ability to complete assignments indicate successful adjustment to new curriculum expectations. Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Curriculum Adaptation shows positive and significant relationship indicating that pupils with higher self-efficacy are better able to adapt to curriculum changes. This finding supports Bandura's social cognitive theory, which posits that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities influence their behaviour and performance. Pupils with strong self-efficacy are more likely to embrace challenges, persist in learning, and apply themselves effectively to new curriculum demands (Frontiers in Education, 2020; OECD, 2025). also Predictive Power of Self-Efficacy from Regression analysis confirmed that self-efficacy predicts curriculum adaptation, accounting for 46.5% of the variance. This emphasizes the importance of psychological readiness in curriculum implementation. It implies that enhancing pupils' self-efficacy can directly improve their capacity to cope with educational reforms, achieve academic success, and develop lifelong learning skills.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that self-efficacy is a critical factor influencing pupils' adaptation to new curriculum changes in primary schools. Pupils with higher self-efficacy exhibit better understanding, participation, and engagement with new content, while those with lower self-efficacy may struggle. Therefore, successful curriculum implementation must consider psychological factors, particularly learners' confidence and belief in their abilities.

Recommendations

Based on the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should adopt teaching strategies that enhance self-efficacy, such as positive feedback, goal-setting, scaffolding, and modeling effective learning behaviours.
2. School administrators should organize workshops and training programs that build pupils' confidence and resilience when engaging with new curriculum content.
3. Curriculum planners should consider psychological readiness and design curricula that gradually introduce changes, allowing pupils to adapt without excessive stress.
4. Parents and guardians should encourage and support their children, helping them develop a positive mindset towards learning and adaptation.
5. Further research should explore other psycho-academic factors, such as motivation, self-regulation, and emotional intelligence, which may interact with self-efficacy in facilitating curriculum adaptation.

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Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to educational research by demonstrating that self-efficacy significantly influences pupils' adaptation to curriculum changes in the Nigerian context, providing empirical evidence for educators and policymakers to integrate psychological support into curriculum implementation strategies.

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Pupils' Self-Efficacy and Curriculum Adaptation Questionnaire (PSECAQ)"

Please read each statement carefully and indicate your response by ticking (✔) the appropriate option:

Section A: Self-Efficacy (10 items)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I am confident I can understand new lessons introduced in class.				
2.	I feel I can complete new assignments successfully.				
3.	I believe I can solve problems in new subjects without much difficulty.				
4.	I am confident in asking questions when I do not understand a topic.				
5.	I feel I can keep up with changes in the curriculum.				
6.	I am able to learn new topics faster than most of my classmates.				
7.	I can remember new information taught by my teachers.				
8.	I believe I can perform well in new tests or exercises.				
9.	I am confident in applying new knowledge in practical tasks.				
10.	I feel I can overcome challenges in learning new content.				

Section B: Curriculum Adaptation (10 items)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
11.	I participate actively in lessons when new topics are introduced.				
12.	I understand new lessons without needing extra help.				
13.	I can complete assignments based on new curriculum content on time.				
14.	I adjust easily to changes in teaching methods.				
15.	I enjoy learning new topics even if they are difficult.				
16.	I can apply knowledge from new lessons in daily activities.				
17.	I feel comfortable using new learning materials provided by the teacher.				
18.	I can follow instructions for new tasks without difficulty.				
19.	I try to learn new things even when I face challenges.				
20.	I feel confident to ask for clarification when new lessons are confusing.				

Scoring Guide:

Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

Higher scores indicate higher self-efficacy and better adaptation to curriculum changes.

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